

ALASKA PEOPLE

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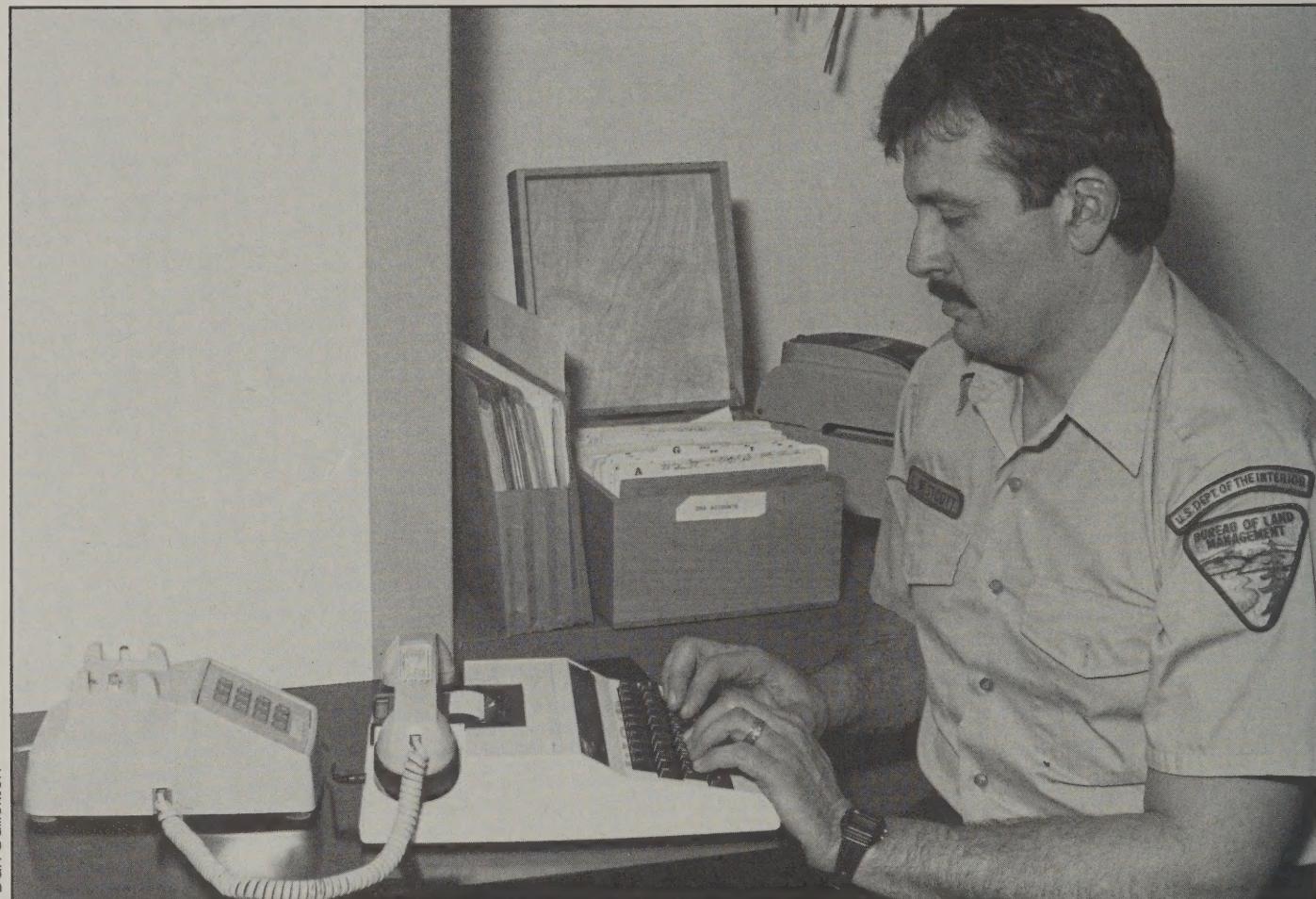


*Season's
Greetings*



Westcott opens hearing

Dan Gullickson



Cal Westcott demonstrates the use of the TTY machine in BLM's Public Room in Fairbanks. The machine allows people with hearing disabilities to communicate with the public contact representatives when dealing with land issues.

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

Cal Westcott, outdoor recreation planner for the Arctic District, is serving his second term as president of Deaf Community Service, a nonprofit organization providing services for deaf or hard of hearing people in the Fairbanks community.

The organization started as an interpreter referral program at the Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association, and evolved into Deaf Community Service, or DCS, in the late 1980s. As president, Westcott sets up committees to address specific issues, monitors

the interpreter qualification program, and makes sure the organization runs according to its mission.

The volunteers in DCS still maintain the interpreter referral service, which ensures interpreter qualification and certification.

Interpreters translate lectures and instructions into sign language for deaf students at schools from elementary to college. They often accompany the deaf to doctors and lawyers, to consultations with the state Division of Vocational

world to the deaf

Rehabilitation, and to a new workplace while the hearing impaired person learns a new job. They also provide interpretation for some of the Fairbanks Light Opera Theater productions.

Westcott got involved partly because he remembers the isolation of his childhood, when he was the only deaf student in his school.

"Teachers in the late 1960s, early '70s, at least in my school, didn't know how to handle a deaf student," he said. "Since I had a 70-percent hearing

loss in both ears, I learned to lip read. It wouldn't have done me any good to sign—no one else in my community knew sign language." A hearing aid at the age of five helped, but didn't correct the hearing loss completely.

Westcott still depends on lip reading to assist his hearing aid, but he doesn't let it slow him down. Since joining the Arctic District, he has put 89,000 miles on the Dalton Highway, planning and developing public facilities along the highway and talking to the many travelers who visit this remote area of Alaska in the summers.

Deaf Community Service tries to bring the latest in hearing-related technology to the Fairbanks community. "For instance, at city assembly public meetings, we have a device that assists hearing aids. Worn around the neck of a person with a hearing aid, it sets up an electromagnetic field that enables the person to hear only what the speaker talking into the

microphone is saying. All background noise, which bothers most hard of hearing people, is eliminated," Westcott says.

People volunteering with Deaf Community Service also work with parents of deaf children to help smooth the path. "We try to explain how the children feel and

how the family can help the deaf child adapt to the home and school, and we tell them about new technology that might help," Westcott said.

"A hearing disability is a silent handicap

in more ways than one," Westcott says. "It's invisible to most people. Wheelchairs are visible, and society has made great progress in providing wheelchair-accessible facilities. But loss of hearing is the most prevalent handicap in the general population, yet little is done to make the hearing world accessible to the deaf or hard of hearing."

For that reason, the DCS workers try to educate schools, local businesses and government agencies about the requirements of the American Disabilities Act passed in 1991.

"There is a big need to focus on the deaf community," Westcott says. "We try to help deaf and hard of hearing people gain independence by improving their living skills and their employment skills. A lot of it comes from lack of education. We try to expand their education and their horizons."



Cal Westcott is one of many Alaska BLMers who give of their time or income to make a difference to others.

Be a true Point of Light this holiday season. Make the commitment to give 5 percent of your time or 5 percent of your paycheck during the coming year to someone who needs your help.

The rewards may surprise you.

BLMers help restore historic

by Andy Williams

Tanana Valley Railroad Engine No. 1 will one day chug around Alaskaland in Fairbanks, thanks in part to the efforts of BLM employees.

The wood-fired steam locomotive once carried passengers and freight along the 45-mile narrow-gauge Tanana Valley Railroad to gold mining camps around Fairbanks. It was moved to Alaskaland when the theme park was built in 1967 and has sat there ever since.

In September 1991, BLM audio-visual production specialist Dan Gullickson and two other people decided to try to restore the locomotive. They formed a corporation, Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad, Inc., and began raising funds and soliciting volunteers.

Response from the community has been strong. The corporation has a membership of about 75 paying members and sponsors, including half a dozen or more BLM employees.

Initial plans called merely for a shed over the locomotive to protect it. But when the volunteers inspected it, they found the engine to be in remarkably good shape despite having weathered many Fairbanks winters as well as the 1967 Fairbanks flood. Plans quickly progressed to a cosmetic facelift and then to a full restoration of the engine to operating order.

"Our guarantee is that it will be running by March of 1999, which is the 100th anniversary of the year it was built," Gullickson said.

Part of the effort by the Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad has been to research the history of the engine. Built in March 1899 by the H.K. Porter Co. of Pittsburgh, Pa., it operated for five years at coal mines downriver from Dawson on the Yukon River.



BLM employee Curtis Fortenberry helps Pat Durrand lift the smoke stack from the Tanana Valley Railroad Engine No. 1, a historic locomotive being restored at Alaskaland in Fairbanks.

locomotive

The locomotive arrived by steamboat at the old Chena townsite on July 4, 1905. It was the first steam engine in Alaska's Interior.

The engine carried passengers and supplies to Ester, Chatanika, Olnes and other gold camps, first for the Tanana Mines and Tanana Valley Railroads and later for the Alaska Railroad. It was retired in 1923 and placed on display at the old train station near Samson Hardware in downtown Fairbanks.

Gullickson, who serves as president of Friends of the Tanana Railroad, said restoration has been totally volunteer, and that BLM employees have played

a major role. Curt Fortenberry, an engineer with BLM, is helping to restore the engine. Betsy Bonnell, a realty specialist with the Kobuk District, and Bo Hinckley, a former BLMer, researched property records to find out who owned land on which railroad artifacts were found. Bonnell's husband, Ray, created a drawing of the engine, which was printed and sold to raise funds. Randy Goodwin, an outdoor recreation planner with the Steese/White Mountains District, helped locate artifacts.

Gullickson said volunteer work crews have found no problems that might prevent the engine

from being restored. "The engine was well taken care of. There's no reason why we can't get it running again," he said.

When restoration is complete, the locomotive will circle Alaska-land on 36-inch-wide tracks, which are already in place. Construction of an engine house is planned, with an attached museum to house artifacts from the railroad and other railroading memorabilia.



Dan Gullickson (right) works with Dr. Nicholas Deely to restore the locomotive used in the early days of Fairbanks.
(Photos courtesy of Friends of Tanana Valley Railroad, Inc.)

Volunteers get a foot in t



VISTA volunteers (l-r) Steve Haines, Shelley Jones, Jeff Brune and John Manning.

by Ella Wright

An aunt in D.C., a BLM father and an Alaska Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor put out the word. Word about volunteering with BLM Alaska.

Forty-seven of 1,054 BLM Alaska volunteers from FY 89 through FY 92 became either temporary or full-time BLMers, proving that the volunteer program benefits both the agency AND the volunteer.

Take Linda Mosley. She's one of 283 volunteers for FY 92. Mosley will benefit from clerical and administrative experience in Human Resource Management. And Nancy Brainerd, employee development assistant, with Mosley's help will meet demands of a heavy workload during "awards season."

Mosley, a former cook and maid, hopes to get a federal service job. After suffering a back injury, she moved from Texas to Alaska. She asked Vocational Rehabilitation to assist with her training outside the domestic field. After mastering basic computer, typing and bookkeeping skills, she graduated from Anchorage's Computer Skills Training School last January. However, she needed actual

hands-on experience.

Her vocational counselor and Bob Moore, former volunteer coordinator, agreed she could get that experience at BLM. She volunteers 27 hours a week in the employee programs and services section, where she reviews and prepares awards packages. She also files, types, and inputs data into computer files. She says this is good because she doesn't have a computer at home to practice on.

Brainerd supervises and evaluates Mosley's performance. "I can see in her a great desire to cross over from the domestic field. I support women," she said. "And, I can relate."

Mosley says she gains more confidence every day at the office. "I like having my own office cubical. I pretend it's for real. I try to do the best job I can. They treat me like I'm one of the regular employees. They even invite me to their [employee section's] staff meetings. I like it here."

John Manning likes it too. He and Shelly Jones, daughter of RAPS coordinator Bob Jones, were VISTA volunteers during 1991. After serving together for a year as RAPS coordinators, Manning was hired as an ASO office services clerk, and Jones volunteered as a summer seasonal. BLM later hired Jones to fill the Steese-White Mountain District surface protection specialist position.

Manning says when his aunt in D.C. told him about the vacant RAPS position, he applied. He left a well-paying retail sales job in Denver, Colorado. "Volunteering," he said "was a way to get my foot in BLM's doors."

Like Mosley, Jones and Manning value volunteer "experiences" with BLM. Manning has a degree in marketing but his goal

the door

is a career in management. He says he acquired management experience running the RAPS program. RAPS gave him opportunities to visit Native villages, an archaeological dig and a cadastral survey project. Jones has a degree in natural resource management. As a regular volunteer, her payoff was the lessons she learned doing the Kobuk District's fisheries inventory.

The BLM Alaska volunteer program continues to gain momentum each year as volunteers like Mosley, Jones and Manning opt for an opportunity to serve, for the experience or for a chance to "get their foot in the door" at BLM or another federal agency.

From volunteer to BLMer—

From FY 89 through FY 92, BLM Alaska hired 49 volunteers, including VISTA, regular volunteers and hosted workers (who work for BLM but are paid by another agency).

During FY 89 through FY 91, BLM Alaska hired 3 volunteers to fill permanent positions at the district level and the Alaska Fire Service; 17 to fill permanent and temporary positions in the Alaska State Office; 22 hosted workers and 1 from the VISTA program. In FY 92, BLM placed a total of 3 volunteers in permanent positions at the ASO and Anchorage District. Steese White Mountain District converted 1 Arctic District volunteer to permanent status; hired Jones, a former VISTA volunteer; and retained 1 seasonal on the employment rolls.

Volunteers are essential to getting the work done. From FY 86 through FY 92, 1,644 volunteers worked 204,933 hours

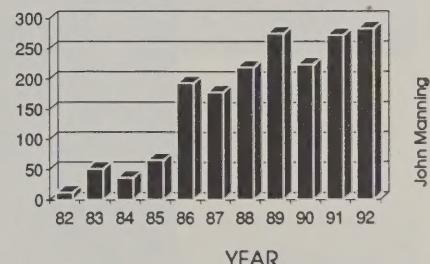


Volunteer Linda Mosley helps process employee incentive awards packages.

and saved BLM \$2,613,602.00. In FY 92 alone, 283 volunteers saved BLM \$556,466, putting in 37,055 hours of work.

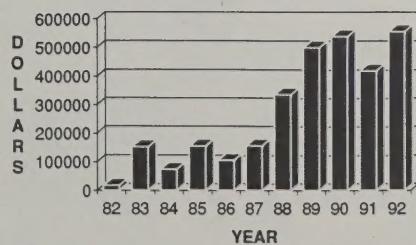
Volunteers contribute the largest number of hours in wildlife and other renewable resources, cultural resources, surface minerals, land surveys and conveyances, and administration.

Number of volunteers BLM Alaska



John Manning

Savings to BLM



John Manning

Once an Eagle Scout...

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

Arctic District Manager Dee Ritchie's dedication to scouting has led to a lifetime of volunteerism with the Boy Scouts of America.

Ritchie started in scouting at the age of 12. He eventually achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, and now has seven sons who are Eagle Scouts.

"Scouting teaches young men the importance and proper use of natural resources," says Ritchie. "Since natural resources has been my profession for the past 30 years, the scouting program fits in with my own ideals.

"Scouting teaches a boy how to relate to adults. The program was designed to bridge the generation gap, and it still serves that purpose," Ritchie added.

Ritchie served as scoutmaster for 14 years in Utah, Wyoming and Washington, D.C. He began serving on the Executive Board of the Midnight Sun Boy Scout Council after arriving in Alaska in early 1990.

As Council Commissioner, Ritchie made sure the local units were staffed, registered and trained. He is now vice president on the executive board, which serves all boy scout units north of the Alaska Range.

Ritchie's talents and his position as manager of the northernmost BLM district in the United States

are both valuable to the scouting program on the North Slope. "Dee Ritchie is an excellent volunteer leader with a great background in scouting," said Mike Johns, executive director of the Midnight Sun Council. "He has strengthened our North Slope program immensely."

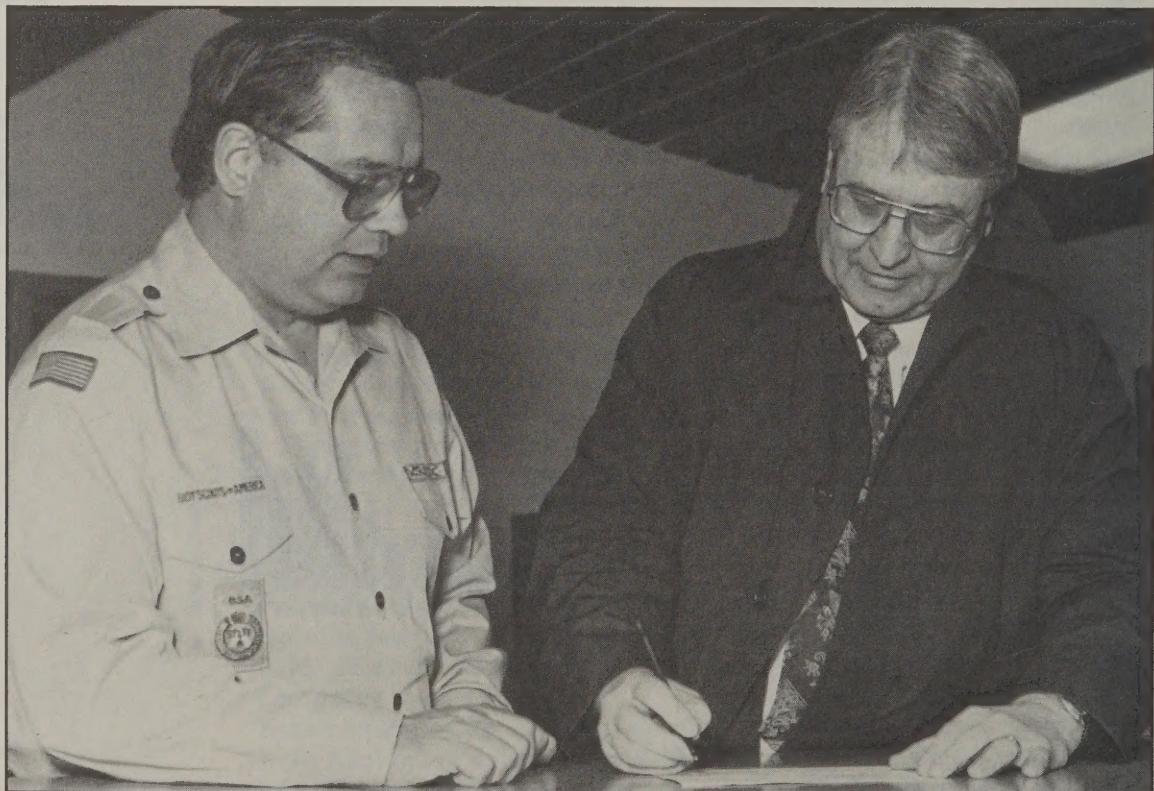
Through Ritchie's efforts, scouts from the North Slope attend Lost Lake Camp, 40 miles south of Fairbanks, each summer under the Eskimo Flight program. He also monitors other programs for village scouts, such as marksmanship and the Clair Opeaka Run Encampment near Barrow.

Ritchie stresses the importance of training men to lead scouting units. Ritchie teaches the Wood Badge adult leadership course for the Midnight Sun Council. About 40 people from Alaska and the Lower 48 attend each year to learn how to teach the course to other volunteers in their respective areas. This will be the sixth time he has taught the course.

"Scouting, to me, represents a holistic lifestyle. Scouts learn to care for themselves and others in the outdoors," said Ritchie. "They learn to appreciate nature, build good citizenship skills, and gather information about possible professions.

"In other words, the Boy Scout program gives the young men of America direction for living life."

Arctic District Manager Dee Ritchie signs Boy Scout paperwork for Mike Johns, executive director of the Midnight Sun Boy Scout Council.



Dan Gullickson

Fairbanks support staff moves

by Andy Williams

Support services in Fairbanks are back to normal after a hectic two weeks when much of the staff moved seven miles across town.

Fourteen members of the Support Services staff moved lock, stock and file cabinet from the District Office Building on University Avenue to the Alaska Fire Service building on Fort Wainwright.

The recent OEER eliminated the position of Fairbanks Support Center Manager and placed Support Services in Alaska's northern region under the AFS Manager.

Timing of the personnel move was geared to the laying of new carpet in the AFS building. By Nov. 1, the carpet was down and the move began. While some people laid out office space and installed telephones and electrical outlets at AFS, others packed and labeled files and office equipment and trucked them across town.

Connie Monroe, Chief, Branch of Administrative Services, supervises Support Services. Jim Kelton coordinated the move and the logistics necessary to accomplish it.

Terry O'Connell of Fire Services said the move was made without major disruption of services. "It was a matter of having a space plan and getting the telephones and computers set up. Everything went off without a hitch,"

he said.

Staff from Procurement, Property and Personnel moved physically to AFS. Office Services, Public Affairs and Records and Public Information moved organizationally to AFS, but will remain physically in the District Office Building.

Tentative plans call for the Kobuk District staff to move into the space vacated by Support Services, while the Arctic and Steese/White Mountain Districts will absorb the additional space on the second floor.



Connie Monroe sorts through boxes of material piled on her desk after the recent move.

Andy Williams

On Nov. 17 BLM and the Copper River Native Association signed a cooperative agreement that will give Copper River Valley residents greater local participation in subsistence resources management.

Under the agreement, the Copper River Native Association will gather data from local residents about the traditional uses of subsistence resources.

BLM subsistence program leader Tom Boyd explains: "Previous attempts at gathering information from the Ahtna Region communities have often been impaired by language and cultural differences. The Copper River Native Association can provide cross-cultural communication, direct links to traditional governing factions in the area."



SD Ed Spang (left) and Ken Johns, Executive Director of the Copper River Native Association.

Ed Spang

Thomas honored at D.C. awards luncheon



DSD Ray Thomas (right) receives an IRM award from DOI's Ed Kay at ceremonies in Washington, D.C.

On Nov. 16 DSD for Information Resources Management Ray Thomas received Government Computer News' IRM award. Ed Kay of DOI's Policy, Management and Budget Office presented the award to Thomas for his contribution to improved information resources management. He was one of 9 employees in the Department of Interior recognized for their contributions to automation within government.

Thomas was selected for the award in recognition of his leadership for BLM's recently completed Release 1 project. This project moved BLM Alaska's land records information from an outdated platform to a modern relational database environment, providing increased access and an ability to retrieve customized information.

"The real pat on the back goes to my staff and the IRM organization," said Thomas. "They're a real talented and dedicated group, committed to continually looking for opportunities to improve and streamline the way we do business."

Workwise or Otherwise

A new computer-controlled microfilm system has been installed in ASO **Title and Land Status** section. The system consists of a processor/camera, high-speed duplicator and collator which produces 35mm aperture cards for distribution to users of Alaska land status records. The new equipment replaces three obsolete pieces of microfilm equipment and is expected to reduce the labor required by previous methods by one full-time position.



The **Glennallen District Office** is providing emergency assistance to the National Park Service since it's Slana ranger's office burned down in early November. The district has loaned its dump truck, Bobcat and other essential equipment to the Park Service for removing the debris left by the fire. Many BLMers may remember Slana as the last federal homestead site in Alaska.



Valuing Diversity training in Alaska has successfully reached over 900 BLM employees, nearly all the BLMers in the state. Alaska BLM is ahead of schedule for this required training, as mandated by the Secretary of the Interior. The training included presentations and informational videos followed by in-depth discussions of the different ways valuing diversity is applied to work situations. The training will continue as part of new employee orientation.



Applause!

Supervisors can help to expedite award processing by checking award packets for accuracy, appropriateness of award, and proper forms. If you have questions, call Nancy Brainerd at 271-3187.

Sustained Superior Performance Award

Mary Hartel, Land Surveyor, Division of Cadastral Survey

Kenneth Higgins, Carpenter, Division of Administrative Services

Richard Williams, Maintenance Mechanic, Division of Administrative Services

Michael Cincar, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Barry Guim, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Carrie Hicks, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Troy Schmitt, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Frank White, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Michael Rose, Aircraft Freight Loader Foreman, Division of Operations

Alice Hossfeld, Land Law Examiner, Division of Conveyance Management

Lois Simenson, Supervisory Land Law Examiner, Division of Administrative Services

Special Act Award

Dominic Bernardo, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Jack Frost, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Rick Douglas, Cartographic Technician, Division of Administrative Services

Quality Increase Award

James Sisk, Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist, Arctic District Office

William Hopster, General Supply Specialist, Division of Operations

Patricia Underwood, Lead Land Law Examiner, Division of Conveyance Management

Jill Cubbedge, Secretary, Division of Administrative Services

Loyd Miller, Supervisory Land Law Examiner, Division of Administrative Services

Length of Service Award

10-Year Service Award

Mary Woodward, Support Services Specialist, Division of Operations

Paul Salvatore, Realty Specialist, Arctic District Office

Susan Lavin, Land Law Examiner, Division of Lands and Renewable Resources

20-Year Service Award

Kenneth Higgins, Carpenter, Division of Administrative Services

David Dorris, Project Coordinator, Division of Mineral Resources

C.T. Vaughan, Editorial Assistant, Division of Cadastral Survey

Dennis Nielsen, Safety and Occupational Health Specialist, Division of Operations

Retirements

George Harper, Computer Program Analyst, Division of Information Resource Management

Welcome Aboard

Timothy D. Howard, Lead Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service

Robyn F. Milligan, Secretary (Office Automation), Arctic District Office

Howard E. Harrell, Equal Employment Specialist, Alaska Fire Service

Lee Adler, Purchasing Agent, Glennallen District Office

Anne L. Wood, Land Law Examiner, Division of Conveyance Management

Virginia Spacer, Secretary, Division of Conveyance Management

Moving On

Judy Demming, Cartographic Technician, Division of Operations

This information provided by ASO Human Resources.



After more than 30 years of federal service, Southwest Adjudication Branch Chief **Mary Jane Piggott** said goodbye to friends and co-workers on December 3.

"For my retirement, I plan to do absolutely nothing, for a while anyway," Mary Jane said. She plans to remain in Alaska. Southwest land law examiner Kathy Flippin commented, "Our branch is going to miss Mary Jane, but I'm sure now she'll have plenty of time to enjoy her gardening."

Where Are They Now?



Community involvement is a great way to keep busy and stay active after retirement. That's how retired natural resource specialist **Larry Allen** sees it.

Allen retired from BLM in 1985, and now spends time as a volunteer for the Anchorage School District. He works as an attendant on a special education

school bus four days a week. "Those are 'my kids,'" he says thoughtfully. "They all know me and crowd around as soon as they see me. I love to teach them things, and be their friend."

Each week Allen rides along with "his kids" on a school bus to and from school. The bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift, and Allen helps the kids as they get on and off the bus. He also keeps a watchful eye on the kids while the bus is in motion so the driver can focus on driving along Anchorage's winter streets.

During the summer months, when school is out of session, Allen finds time for temporary seasonal work with the Forest Service and the National Park Service. He has spent summer months building trails in Denali National Park, and on the Kenai Peninsula.

But his heart is with his young friends who need his helping hand and warm smile. "They need lots of attention," he says, "and I give it to them."

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*Happy
Holidays*



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